

§ 1.552

38 CFR Ch. I (7–1–12 Edition)

pursuant to 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2). Ordinarily, the VA component providing a public reading room space will be the component that maintains the record.

Record means a document, a portion of a document, and information contained within a document, and can include information derived from a document or a database. Such documents may be maintained in paper, electronic, and other forms, but do not include objects, such as tissue slides, blood samples, or computer hardware.

Request means a written demand for records under the FOIA as described below. The term *request* includes any action emanating from the initial demand for records, including an appeal related to the initial demand.

Requester means, generally, any individual, partnership, corporation, association, or foreign or state or local government, which has made a demand to access an agency record.

Submitter means any person or entity (including corporations, state, local and tribal governments and foreign governments) from whom VA obtains trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information either directly or indirectly.

VA means the Department of Veterans Affairs.

VA Central Office (VACO) means the headquarters of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The mailing address is 810 Vermont Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20420.

Written or in writing means communications such as letters, photocopies of letters, electronic mail, and facsimiles (faxes), and does not include any form of oral communication.

[76 FR 51892, Aug. 19, 2011]

§ 1.552 General provisions.

(a) *Additional information.* The following Internet link will provide access to VA's information that is electronically available under the FOIA: <http://www.foia.va.gov/>.

(b) *Public Liaisons.* VA has made available FOIA Public Liaisons to assist in the resolution of disputes between the agency and the requester. Contact information for VA's FOIA Public Liaisons can be found on VA's FOIA home page. See § 1.552(a) for the pertinent Internet address.

(c) *FOIA Annual Report.* Under 5 U.S.C. 552(e), VA is required to prepare an annual report regarding its FOIA activities. The report includes information about FOIA requests and appeals. Copies of VA's annual FOIA report may be obtained from VA's Chief FOIA Officer or by visiting VA's FOIA Web site. See § 1.552(a) for the pertinent Internet address.

[76 FR 51893, Aug. 19, 2011]

§ 1.553 Public reading rooms and discretionary disclosures.

(a) VA maintains a public reading room electronically at its FOIA home page on the Internet, which contains the records that the FOIA requires to be regularly made available for public inspection and copying. See § 1.552(a) for the pertinent Internet address. Information routinely provided to the public (press releases, for example) may be provided without following these sections. In addition, as a matter of policy, VA may make discretionary releases of records or information exempt from disclosure under the FOIA when permitted to do so in accordance with current law and governmental policy. Each VA component is responsible for determining which of its records are required to be made available and for making its records available electronically.

(b) VA may process, in accordance with the FOIA, records that it makes publicly available. Information in a public reading room record will be redacted, for example, if its release would be a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy.

(c) Some VA components may also maintain physical public reading rooms. Information regarding these components and their contact information is available on VA's FOIA home page on the Internet. See § 1.552(a) for the pertinent Internet address. If the requester does not have access to the Internet and wishes to obtain information regarding publicly available information or components that have a physical reading room, he or she may write VA's Chief FOIA Officer at the following address: Department of Veterans Affairs, FOIA Service (005R1C),